

Identification of Homeless Students in Your District

- Avoid using the word “homeless” with school personnel, families, or youth.
- Provide awareness activities for school staff (registrars, secretaries, counselor’s, nurses, teachers, tutors, bus drives, security officers, dropout prevention specialist, etc.).
- Post outreach materials and posters in all schools and where there is frequent influx of low in-come families and youth in high-risk situations, including motels, campgrounds, libraries, heath center, and youth services.
- Coordinate with youth-service agencies, such as drop-in centers, street outreach, shelters, child welfare, juvenile courts, teen parent programs, etc.
- Make special efforts to identify preschool children, including asking about siblings of school age children.
- Use enrollment and withdrawal forms to inquire about living situations.

Identification Process



- At the beginning of the school year make sure that all students get a McKinney-Vento registration form. This form is what you will use to identify the students that qualify for your program.
- Attend open-house events if possible to identify students.
- Visit your local shelters, hotels, motels, and seek assistance with identification. Many times they will know who is homeless before you will.
- Look over your homeless students from the previous year and see if they still qualify. A student can be homeless from one year to the next. All students still have to fill out the form each year. You need to keep this on file to verify homeless status.

Impacts of Homelessness on Children and Youth

- Higher incidences of acute and chronic illnesses, depression and anxiety.
- Homelessness in early childhood is associated with poor classroom engagement and poor social skills in early elementary school.
- The achievement gaps between homeless and low-income elementary students tend to persist, and may even worsen over time.
- A youth who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to drop out of school.



Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

- Poor Health
- Emotional trauma, depression, anxiety.
- Stereotypes and lack of awareness.
- Under-identification.
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity.
- Enrollment requirements (school records, health records, proof of residence, guardianship).
- Lack of transportation.
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.



Eligibility-----who is Covered?

- Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence—
 - Sharing the housing of others due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
 - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
 - Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live.
 - Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
 - Migratory Children living in above circumstances.

Determining Eligibility

- Case-by-case determination
- Get as much information as possible (with sensitivity and discretion).
- Look at the MV definition (specific examples in the definition first, then overall definition).
- Shared Housing considerations:
 - Where would you go if you couldn't stay here?
 - What led you to move in to this situation?





Identification Strategies

- Coordinate with community service agencies, such as shelters, soup kitchens, law enforcement, legal aid, public assistance and housing agencies, mental health agencies and public health departments.
- Coordinate with youth service agencies such as juvenile courts, teen parent programs, or youth organizations.
- Make special efforts to identify preschool children and their siblings.
- Use enrollment and withdrawal forms to inquire about living situations.

Local McKinney-Vento Liaisons

- Every LEA must designate a McKinney-Vento Liaison able to carry out his/her legal duties.
- Liaisons must ensure that----
 - McKinney-Vento students enroll and in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
 - Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies.
 - Public notices of MV rights is disseminated in locations frequented by parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth, in a manner and form understandable to them.

Liaisons (cont.)

- Liaisons must ensure that (cont.)---
 - School personnel provided McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and other supports.
 - Children, youth and families have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention (IDEA Part C) and other preschool programs.
 - Children, youth and families receive referrals to health care, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing and other services.
 - Disputes are resolved and assistance to access transportation is provided.
 - Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school and that procedures are implemented to identify and remove barriers that prevent them from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with State, local and school policies.

Unaccompanied Youth --- Strategies

- clear policy for enrolling unaccompanied youth immediately, whether youth enroll themselves, liaisons do enrollment, caretakers enroll youth in their care, or another procedure is in place.
- Help youth enroll in sports, clubs or other organizations that require parent assistance.
- POA---what is this, and how and why should I do it?
 - FERPA
 - Medial/Mental Health issues with UY



Enrollment in Preschool



- State McKinney-Vento plans must describe procedures that ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs administered by SEA or LEAs.
- Preschools are included in the school of origin definition
- Liaisons must ensure access to Head Start, early intervention (IDEA Part C), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA.
- Facilitate enrollment: include homelessness in needs assessments and priorities; put McKinney-Vento families at the top of the waiting list; provide enrollment forms on-site at shelters and motels.
- Expedite records by working together: joint release forms; share records within a family.

Preschool Enrollment (cont.)

- Develop joint/streamlined procedures and forms: joint intake forms; provide uninterrupted services as children move.
- Work with families and providers to meet school of origin and comparable transportation requirements appropriately for young children.
- Cross-train preschool, school and service providers.





In Your District....

- Train your staff to assist you with identification. This includes your teachers, bus drivers, maintenance people, administrators, nurses, and secretaries. You can do this at your yearly in-service time, or any other time that is available.
- Be your own best cheerleader---your going to need it! Market, market, market your program. Let others in your district know that you are the Homeless Liaison and keep them reminded of this. This will better enable to identify your students.